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PAX ROMANA

MIEC-IMCS — Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques
International Movement of Catholic Students

MIIC-ICMICA — Mouvement International des Intellectuels Catholiques
International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs

Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and with UNESCO

Intervention of Pax Romana on Agenda Item 9 at the 43rd Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights : (1987)

Item 9 : The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

Pax Romana made up of Catholic students, intellectuals and professionals, conveys to you, the Bureau, the UN Secretariat and all those assembled here its cordial greetings and well wishes.

In presenting this agenda item, Mr. Herndl, Asst. Sec. Gen. for Human Rights rightly said that the right ofpeoples to self-determination remains the cornerstone of both the covenants. Earlier speakers have repeated in different forms, the principles involved and the situations affected. Amongst them, the delegation of Australia stated, "Perhaps the most obvious examples of the denial of self-determination arise from situations of foreign military intervention and occupation" (6.2.87)

Mr. Chairman,

Eleven years ago, Indonesia carried out a brutal invasion and occupation of East Timor. In defiance of repeated UN resolutions calling for its withdrawal, Indonesia continues to illegally occupy East Timor. The subsequent Timorese death toll is a well known fact to all of us here. The occupying forces have sealed off East Timor from the rest of the world. Often, it is difficult to get current information. Nevertheless, the information received by Pax Romana clearly shows a pattern of gross and systematic violations.

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Mr. Chairman,

Since 1975, the Special Committee on Decolonisation has held hearings on East Timor. Last year, as the occupying forces were commemorating their 10th Anniversary of annexation, a broad range of organisations testified before this institution of such standing. All these testimonies indicate that fear and mistrust have come to govern the lives of the East Timorese population. Within East Timor itself, they have been unable to travel at will, or engage in normal economic activity or to speak freely. If suspected of sympathising with those who continue to resist the alien rule, death and torture are the consequences. Some have disappeared. Others imprisoned without trial. How could we here speak about "free" elections in 1987, under the continued threat of alien forces ?

Mr. Chairman,

Many of these violations have repeatedly been presented to this Commission. Unfortunately, this year, the working group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, has forgotten to mention East Timor explicitly, as was the case in previous years. This is one more instance to erase its very existence. And habitually, the occupying powers refuse to answer sensibly, the charges brought against them. The Commission still awaits their precise answers.

Let me just mention one form of violation based on reliable sources, namely, the mass arrests of civilians in different forms. Last July, eighty people were reported arrested in Baucau and large numbers in Dili, Lospalos and Viqueque. A letter received from East Timor around early part of 1986 reports the use of strategic hamlets, referred to as concentration camps, continues on a wide scale. People live in a permanent state of encirclement. They are not allowed to leave their villages beyond 3 km. Besides, they need a 'pass' from the occupying military authorities. In Uatolari, the armed forces (Indonesia) set up barbed wire around the centre of the village. At 5 p.m., the whole population has to be in this fenced off area. This dehumanized disregard for human rights still persits.

Mr. Chairman,

Neither geopolitical, geostrategic, economic or ethical argument can be made to justify the continuation of Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Nor 'a plea of territorial integrity cannot be used as a shield from international examination'... Sri Lanka on Item 9. In the light of the

agenda of ethnocide which Indonesia's actions illustrate, any claim or statement by this alien power, which attempts to justify remaining in East Timor is not only highly questionable, but an affront to the human dignity of all of us. Can there be a lasting peace in a world ruled by relations - social, economic and political - that favour one group or nation at the expense of another ? (Pop. Prog.)

Mr. Chairman,

In spite of all these sufferings and pain, the Maubere people continue to struggle for their independence and for the survival of their culture and religion. Yet, as Pax Romana stated here in February 1985, the East Timor still remains as one of the most tragic and solitary exceptions in recent history to the provision in International Human Rights Agreements that peoples have the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural developments.

Hence, on behalf of a broad range of organisations, we urge this Commission to undertake the following initiatives that would assure the rights of the East Timor people to self-determination. Namely,

a) demand that the occupying power to cease all hostilities perpatrated against the population of East Timor;
b) call upon the Indonesian authorities to fulfill its promises to allow independent observers to visit East Timor; (including other relief and human rights agencies);
c) encourage the Secretary General of the UN to continue his efforts, including representatives of the East Timor people in talks held under his auspices (UN Res. 37/30 - 1982).

These measures would also satisfy the demands made on this Commission by the General Assembly (Res. 41/100).

Concluding, I wish to bring to your attention the following :
In August 5, 1986 at Louvain delegates to 10th World Council IYCS and 21st Interfederal Assembly IMCS-Pax Romana sent a letter to the Secretary General, President of Portugal, President of Indonesia, the UNCHR, the Euro-parliament, the Council of Europe and the Portugese parliament :
"The undersigned wish to express their deepest concern at the continued occupation of East Timor by Indonesia, in flagrant disregard for International law and the right to self-determination.

Our concern is further heightened by reports from informed sources

that the Indonesian presence in East Timor has been accompanied by a blatant violation of human rights and a policy of 'cultural genocide' aimed at eliminating all trace of a once culturally and historically distinct people".

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

R.J. Rajkumar

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